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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0774
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2080
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 0306
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0962
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 0100
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1128
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0188
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 0069
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0210
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 0119
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

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STATE FOR G, CA/OCS/ACS/EAP, EAP/EX, EAP/MLS, EAP/EP, INR, OES/STC
(PBATES), OES/IHA (DSINGER AND NCOMELLA), MED, AND H;

STATE PASS TO USAID FOR ANE AND GH (CARROLL, ACLEMENTS, AND
CJENNINGS)

STATE PASS TO USTR (DBISBEE)

STATE PASS TO HHS/OGHA (WSTEIGER, EELVANDER, AND ABHAT)

USDA PASS TO APHIS

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA/AP (LSTERN)

BANGKOK FOR RMO, DCD, USAID (JMACARTHUR AND MBRADY)

ROME FOR FAO

PACOM ALSO FOR FPA HUSO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [SOCI](#) [SCUL](#) [PREL](#) [AMED](#) [AMGT](#) [CASC](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#)

PREL, ETRD, LA

SUBJECT: AVIAN INFLUENZA - WEEKLY REPORT FOR JANUARY 12, 2007

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11. SUMMARY: Following are recent Avian Influenza (AI)-related
developments in Laos:

-- There have been no new outbreaks since our last report.

-- Representative McCollum's visit to Vientiane's leading hospital
both to learn about its capabilities and to express the need for
focus on the AI issue over the long term.

-- The AI Partners Group raised questions about how planned Louis
Pasteur Institute Laos would fit into AI pandemic planning, heard
about newly-established laboratory diagnostic capabilities resulting
from the US CDC - WHO Collaboration, and questioned the adequacy of
funding for a planned AI compensation plan expected in March.

12. There have been no AI outbreaks in Laos since our last report.

Representative McCollum's Visit

13. Congresswoman Betty McCollum (D-MIN) learned first-hand about

Vientiane's main Mahasot Hospital during her recent visit to Laos. She discussed available and needed resources in recognizing suspect cases of human avian influenza (AI) and reviewed corresponding clinical case management practices. Dr. Changpheng THAMMAVONG (Director) and Dr. Bounkong SIHAVONG (Deputy Director) described measures taken in preparing Mahasot Hospital, the Principal National Referral Hospital for Laos, to respond to a possible AI pandemic.

14. Congresswoman McCollum expressed a keen appreciation for actions taken by the Mahasot Hospital staff to date. However, she expressed concern that clinical resources at the local level in Laos may not be adequate for case management and infection control demands brought on by a pandemic. The Congresswoman encouraged vigilance and noted growing concern that the real challenge into the future, in the absence of pandemic conditions in the short term, will be to maintain AI preparation as a priority focus. She pointed out that we might not realize a pandemic for many years, but nevertheless need to maintain a high state of alert.

AI Partners Meeting

15. The Meeting of the Partners' Group for Avian and Human Influenza (PGAHI), chaired by Minister of Health Dr. Ponmek Dalaloy with UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Sonam Yangchen Rana as vice-chair, was convened January 11 to update and solicit input from the Donor Community. Dr. Bounlay Phommasac, Director, National Avian and Human Influenza Coordinating Office (NAHICO), provided an overview of progress in implementing the five strategies identified in the National AI Pandemic Plan. The GOL expressed appreciation for USG assistance through UN (WHO and FAO) and NGO partners (AED and Care International).

16. The EC Representative and other donors expressed concern about the establishment and funding of the planned Louis Pasteur Institute Laos, and specifically, asked how this ambitious initiative fit into

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the National AI Pandemic Plan. Dr. Nao Bouta provided clarification as to the nationality of the new Institute, making clear it was Lao, and "only borrowing the Pasteur name". Clearly, while the MOU regarding the establishment of the Pasteur Institute Lao has been signed, there remain significant issues yet to be resolved, including the organization of the new Pasteur Institute Lao vis-a-vis the existing National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology. The GOL agreed, upon the suggestion of the French Ambassador and seconded by the Ambassador, to convene a Donors Meeting to discuss the specifics of the planned Institute and to include potential donors, such as the US, EC (through the World Bank Trust Fund), and the ADB. The Ambassador urged the GOL to avoid unnecessary duplication of lab facilities.

17. WHO informed donors of newly-established laboratory diagnostic capabilities to detect seasonal and avian influenza viruses, supported by the US CDC - WHO Collaboration. This notable accomplishment involved significant bio-safety enhancement to spaces at the National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology for functional (and first-time) RT-PCR functions. The US CDC - WHO Collaboration equipped and supplied the laboratory, and carried out training of NCLE staff.

18. The GOL also announced that its compensation plan decree will be issued in March 2007. A draft plan presented to the donors included varies levels of monetary compensation for commercial and backyard poultry farmers and penalties for those who fail to comply. The plan also addressed compensation for GOL health workers and others who could come in contact with AI through occupational exposures. At that time the GOL also hopes to have clarification on whether donors other than the World Bank (via the Trust Fund) have plans to support the plan. Recently, the World Bank set aside \$350k for compensation, but funds could not be used to pay retroactively farmers who were forced to kill their poultry in during previous outbreaks, most notably the Xatany Outbreak in July 2006. Donors expressed concern that this amount is inadequate and that setting money aside (without earning interest etc.) would not be the best use of donor funds. The UN indicated that it is studying a possible revolving fund. The Ambassador said that compensation in kind -

such as breeder stock, chicks etc. - should also be considered.

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